

**George Washington to Israel Putnam, May 21, 1776, two same date; Orders, The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources, 1745-1799. John C. Fitzpatrick, Editor.**

**\*To MAJOR GENERAL ISRAEL PUTNAM**

Head Quarters, City of New York, May 21, 1776.

Sir: I have reason to believe that the Provencial Congress of this Colony have in Contemplation a Scheme for Siezing the principal Tories, and disaffected Person's [in the most obnoxious parts of the Government] on Long Island, in this City, and the Country round about;<sup>1</sup> and that to carry the Scheme into Execution, they will be obliged to have recourse to the Military power, for assistance. If this should be the case, you are hereby required, during my absence, to afford every aid which the said Congress or their secret Comee. shall apply for [ (consistent with the general Plan of defence now going on) to carry these measures into execution provided it does not interfere too much with our general Plan of defence in weakening this place by].<sup>2</sup>

I need not recommend secrecy to you, as the success, you must be assured will depend absolutely upon precaution, and the dispatch with which the measure, when once adopted, is executed.

General Green will, tho' not in person perhaps, have a principal share in ordering the detachments from his Brigade on Long Island, of course will be a proper Person to let into the whole Plan. I wd. therefore when application is made by Congress, have you and him concert Measures with such Gentlemen as that body shall please to appoint and order the

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execution with as much secrecy and dispatch as possible and at the same time with the utmost decency and good order.

1n May 19 Gouverneur Morris and John Morin Scott reported to the New York Provincial Congress that they had interviewed General Washington on the subject of these rumored Tory plots and found that a scheme of cooperation was on foot between the Connecticut and Long Island Tories. Measures were taken by the Congress and several arrests were made. (See note to Washington's letter to the New York Legislature, Aug. 11, 1776, post.)

2he words within brackets in this letter were stricken out by Washington in the letter sent.